



Australian Pacific Coal

MINUTES OF THE DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD AT DARTBROOK – 21st March 2018

PRESENT:

Cnr Kiwa Fisher	KF	CCC Chair and Upper Hunter Shire Council Representative
Paul Smith	PS	Upper Hunter Shire Council
Scott Brooks	SB	Scott Brooks
Jennifer Lecky	JL	Local Community Representative
Tony Lonergan	TL	Local Community Representative
Andrew Roach	AR	Australian Pacific Coal (AQC) Representative
James Bailey	JB	AQC Environmental Consultant
Dorian Walsh	DW	AQC Acting Dartbrook Environmental Officer
APOLOGY:		
Cnr Martin Rush	MR	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Arthur Mitchell	AM	Upper Hunter Community Representative
Annette Rahn	AR	Local Community Representative
VISITORS:		
Nil		

1. INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES:

- 1.1 The meeting was opened by KF (Chair) at 2:00pm.
- 1.2 JB made introductions and confirmed that the main purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on the recent application to modify the Dartbrook development consent to facilitate the recommencement of limited bord and pillar mining at Dartbrook Mine.
- 1.3 Apologies as per above list.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

- 2.1 N/A

3. CORRESPONDENCE

- 3.1 N/A

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 4.1 N/A

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5. UNDERGROUND MODIFICATION PRESENTATION

- 5.1 JB and AR provided a presentation on the proposed underground modification to Dartbrook DA 231-07-2000 (MOD7), the scope of the supporting Environmental Assessment (EA), proposed stakeholder engagement strategy and timeline (see attached presentation).
- 5.2 In a discussion on the bord and pillar mining method proposed under MOD7, TL noted the significant gas issues which had been encountered in the previous longwall operations on site and the free venting of gas make. JB confirmed that greenhouse gas emission volumes, mitigation and management would be assessed as part of the MOD7 EA.
- 5.3 KF questioned the differences between the AQC statements to the ASX in early 2017 and the plans publicly provided in the recent newsletter and in the presentation. AR confirmed that the plans were quite different and that these had changed due to further work conducted by the Company on a smaller scale operation.
- 5.4 AR outlined where mining had previously been undertaken on site and confirmed that the bord and pillar mining operations proposed under MOD7 would be a subset of the total area of the Kayuga seam currently approved for longwall operations. The maximum 1.5 Million tonnes per annum Run of Mine (ROM) coal volume was sought to allow flexibility in annual operations.
- 5.5 JB described the activities proposed to haul coal using road-registered trucks from the Kayuga Entry along the private access road to the new shaft and coal bin which would be constructed on AQC land to the west of the New England Highway. Two routes around the existing infrastructure were described, one of which was illustrated on a figure. The new shaft would be screened to minimise noise, dust and visual impacts and would provide access to the existing Hunter Tunnel (at a depth of approximately 80m) for the transport of ROM coal under the highway to the East Site. AR confirmed that the extracted coal would not be washed.
- 5.6 TL noted that there would need to be approximately 100 truck movements per day to meet the planned volumes of ROM coal to be transported under the modification. TL also raised the issue of the potential for salinity impacts from watering of the haul route to minimise dust impacts. JB confirmed that the final number of truck movements proposed would be determined as part of the EA process, along with any additional mitigation requirements for the shaft site and haul route.
- 5.7 JB outlined the scope of environmental impact studies to be included in the EA for MOD7. Assessments to be undertaken would include at least air quality (and greenhouse gas), noise, ecology, Aboriginal heritage, subsidence and water.
- 5.8 JB described stakeholder consultation planned for the Modification. Consultation would be undertaken with relevant NSW government agencies, local councils (MSC and UHSC) and the local community. Initial consultation had been undertaken with Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) and Department of Industry, Division of Resources and Geoscience (DGR), however further detail would be presented to both agencies prior to submission of the MOD7 EA. JB also referred to the early stage that the proposal was at in terms of the overall process and highlighted future opportunities for stakeholder consultation and input.

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- 5.9 AR reiterated that AQC will continue to provide regular updates on the process through newsletters and offers of individual briefings once further detail came out of the EA studies.
- 5.10 JB confirmed that if approved, the modification would result in approximately 28 short-term construction jobs, with approximately 100 full-time jobs created during the proposed 10 years of mining operations.
- 5.11 KF noted an issue around the publication of the latest newsletter (February 2018), in that the modification application for the underground had not been flagged previously and would have been a surprise to some members of the community. JB and AR provided background on the case for the MOD7 application in relation to the approvals strategy discussed with DPE, timing constraints and decision points to proceed with submission of the application. It was further noted that the potential for the recommencement of underground mining was flagged in each of the five AQC newsletters released over Dartbrook Mine dating back to July 2017.
- 5.12 SB raised a concern that the most recent newsletter did not describe the extension to the life of the Dartbrook approval by five years which was included in the application submitted to DPE. JB apologised for the oversight by not explicitly including reference to the proposed extension of mine life but noted that it did explain that the current DA expires in 2022 and that MOD7 was seeking approval to extract coal for a 10 year period. JB committed to explicitly referring to the request for an extension of time in future newsletters over MOD7.
- 5.13 SB also noted that it was highly unusual that MSC councillors and officers were not approached in advance of the February 2018 newsletter being sent out. JB confirmed that an offer of briefings had been made to both UHSC and MSC in advance of newsletter distribution.
- 5.14 KF noted that recommencement of underground operations had previously been deemed to be uneconomic and expressed concern from the community that the underground application would be a Trojan horse for the larger open cut proposal. JB and AR confirmed that the underground proposal has been justified (and would be need to be assessed) solely on its own investment merits.
- 5.15 During discussion of the proposed timing of the modification KF questioned the significance of the 1 March 2018 deadline for submission of the MOD7 application. JB confirmed that during recent consultation, the DPE had advised that it would be appropriate for the application to be submitted as a Section 75W Modification Application prior to 1 March 2018 due to transitional arrangements recently gazetted in relation to the repeal of Section 75W of the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act). The modification would otherwise likely have had to be submitted under Section 96(2) of the EP&A Act. JB noted that although the minor changes proposed would fall well within the threshold of a Section 96(2) Modification it was decided to have the modification application dealt with under 75W.
- 5.16 When asked, JB stated that the public exhibition period for the MOD7 EA document was at the discretion of DPE but such minor modifications would typically be exhibited for between two and six weeks. Depending on submissions made during this period, the modification may also need to be assessed by the Independent Planning Commission. TL stated that he would be away during the anticipated exhibition period.
- 5.17 SB questioned the need for the new shaft and whether the Hunter Tunnel had been ruled out as an option for the transport of ROM coal all the way from west to east. AR and JB noted that the previous conveyor infrastructure in the tunnel had been removed, that there were issues with general dilapidation and HSE issues in using some sections of the tunnel. A detailed justification for developing the new shaft and using only the eastern-most section of

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the Hunter Tunnel would be included in the MOD7 EA, along with a discussion on ongoing maintenance and management of water, etc.

- 5.18 AR provided a summary of the justification for use of first workings (bord and pillar) proposed under the modification. SB questioned the use of first workings and whether other mechanisms less robust than a modification application were available to AQC if second workings were planned for the future. JB confirmed that second workings were not definitively ruled out in the future, however the MOD EA would include wording to provide certainty that second workings would only recommence if approved under a subsequent modification application.
- 5.19 TL raised the significant spontaneous combustion problems that had occurred in the extraction of the first two longwall panels in the Kayuga seam. JB confirmed that spontaneous combustion was not anticipated to be an issue for the bord and pillar workings proposed, however this would be assessed in the MOD7 EA.

6. SURFACE MINING STUDIES

- 6.1 JB provided a briefing on the status of studies for the open cut proposal, confirming that the low impact surface mining method being considered was a type of in-pit crusher conveyor (IPCC) system. The IPCC system would require only a relatively small fleet of approximately 15 haul trucks for the handling of overburden material to a crusher. The crusher would then size overburden material for transport via conveyor to an out of pit overburden emplacement area. AR provided examples where IPCC methods had been used internationally.
- 6.2 AR noted that the IPCC was considered under the pre-feasibility studies due to the identified environmental constraints (particularly noise and dust) and the reduction in impacts from IPCC methods when compared to more typical operations used in the Hunter Valley.
- 6.3 JB confirmed that a PM_{2.5} monitoring unit had been set up in Aberdeen at existing EPA air quality monitoring station compound. Data from the monitor was available for the EPA to publish on their Hunter Valley Air Quality Monitoring Network website.
- 6.4 JB also described the upcoming program of works for development of additional geochemical exploration and groundwater monitoring boreholes to provide additional background information. Respective applications for each had been made to DRG and to Department of Industry, Office of Water.
- 6.5 A Gateway assessment was in preparation for the open cut proposal in advance of an application for Secretaries Environmental Assessment Requirements.
- 6.6 AR confirmed that AQC was committed to Dartbrook and that the intent was to establish a more permanent presence in the local area as the process continues.

7. MEETING CLOSED

- 7.1 The meeting closed at 15:30pm.